for 2001 -2002 amounting to Rs. 34.24 crore, a special assistance of Rs. 18.98 crore has also been released from the NCCF for drought to Government of Himachal Pradesh.

So far as rural drinking water supply is concerned, it is also a State subject. Government of India supplements the efforts of the State by providing financial assistance under the Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP) and Rural Drinking Water component of Prime Minister's Gramodaya Yojana (PMGY). During 2000-2001, Rs. 53.85 crores under ARWSP and Rs. 30.77 crores under Rural Drinking Water component of PMGY have been released to State Government. During the current financial year i.e. 2001-2002, an allocation of Rs. 55.59 crore has been made under ARWSP including DDP areas out of which Rs. 27.76 crore have been released and under Rural Drinking Water component of PMGY, Rs. 7.91 crore have been allocated out of which Rs. 3.95 crore have been releasd to the Government of Himachal Pradesh.

Further to facilitate the mitigation efforts, in view of the prevailing scarcity of drinking water in rural areas of Himachal Pradesh on account of drought, the priorities fixed in the ARWSP guidelines have ben relaxed by the Government of India to the extent that the funds under ARWSP and Rural Drinking Water component of PMGY could also be utilised for activities relating to repair, rejuvenation, renovation, restoration and replacement of existing rural drinking water schemes in areas affected by scarcity of drinking water in the State.

Amount released under PMGSY to Assam

3299. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) what amount has been released under PMGSY to the State of Assam last year;

(b) what is its utilisation;

(c) what amount will be released in the current budgetary year of 2001-2002; and

(d) what is the percentage of utilisation in all the rural development schemes of Assam sent by Union Government?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU): (a) to (c) An allocation of Rs. 75. crore was released to the State of Assam for the year 2000-2001 and execution of works is expected to commence shortly. The State Government have been advised that, at this stage, the available funds for the year 2001-2002 may not exceed the last year's allocation.

(d) The State Government have reported utilization of 76.46% of available funds under different Schemes of the Ministry of Rural Development in the year 2000-2001.

National Rural Road Development Agency

†3300. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':
SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to set up a National Rural Road Development Agency with a view to extend roadways to rural areas;

(b) if so, the responsibilities proposed to be assigned to the agency; and

(c) the total lengdi and number of new roads targeted to be constructed to link the rural areas with each other by the end of the Ninth Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU): (a) and (b) Government propose to shortly set up the National Rural Road Development Agency (NRRDA) to extend support to the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGS Y) through advice on technical specifications, project appraisal, appointment of part-time Quality Control Monitors, Management of Monitoring Systems and submission of Periodic Reports to the Ministry of Rural Development. This Agency would be a Society registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.

(c) While no specific target has been fixed regarding the length and number of new roads to be constructed to link the rural areas by the end of the Ninth Five Year Plan (2001-02), the Programme seeks to provide connectivity, by way of an

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.